

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Subregion: SOUTH **Counties:** FRESNO AND TULARE

Applicant: YOSEMITE SEQUOIA RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Project Title: AGRI-NATURE TOURISM SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

Reference Number: SNC 070310

PROJECT SCOPE

The Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council will build upon the successes of similar efforts across California relative to the establishment of agri-nature tourism venues on existing working landscapes. By empowering landowners to retain ownership of their property, development is curbed resulting in widespread watershed protection. Specifically, the Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council will:

- Build upon recent efforts to host these workshops within an expanded geographic range, namely Fresno and Tulare Counties;
- Conduct outreach to potential participants;
- Schedule workshops, acquire venues, and secure subject-matter professionals to present;
- Provide reasonable accommodation for professionals presenting to workshop audiences;
- Provide materials for a series of agri-nature tourism workshops for interested farmers, landowners, and entrepreneurs;
- Provide additional business planning assistance after the workshops have been conducted in collaboration with the Small Business Development Center;
- Develop and reproduce workshop material for workshops in Fresno and Tulare Counties;
- Provide a staff position and salary for a Volunteer In Service to America (VISTA) volunteer to assist in the coordination and implementation of the workshops.

The Council will ensure participants understand the benefits of land preservation to watershed health, and will encourage participants, where possible, to incorporate a watershed stewardship component into the overall business plan as a result of these workshops.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Initiate outreach to potential participants	April 2008
Schedule workshops and secure venues	May 2008 – August 2008
Schedule presenters for workshops	May 2008 – August 2008
Complete and submit six-month progress report to SNC	October 2008
Develop and reproduce workshop materials	September 2008 – January 2009
Host workshop in Fresno County	February 2009
Host workshop in Tulare County	March 2009
Conduct a survey of participants to gauge effectiveness of workshops	February 2009 – March 2009
Complete and submit twelve-month progress report to SNC	April 2009
Conduct business development follow-up assistance as needed	April 2009 – September 2009
Final Report/Final Payment Request	October 2009

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Business Counseling Services	\$10,000
VISTA Program Costs	\$3,000
Presenter Fees	\$2,000
Presenter Travel	\$2,000
Administration	\$2,000
Volunteer and Staff Travel	\$250
Workshop Materials	\$750
GRAND TOTAL	\$20,000

Letters of Support:

- None Submitted

Recommendation:

Recommend for funding at requested amount of \$49,999

Project Summary
Proposition 84 Strategic Opportunity Grant, Category II
Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D
Agri-Nature Tourism Workshops & Participant Support,
Tulare & Fresno Counties

With one of the greatest threats to watershed protection being the possibility of development on working and natural landscapes, the Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council will be holding a series of six workshops in the Fresno County area, and six workshops in the Tulare County area. These workshops will be aimed at providing information for interested participants on diversifying or adding agri-tourism business components making it economically feasible for small agricultural producers to hold onto their land. Through these workshops, participants will be lead through a process to decide if the addition of an agri-nature tourism enterprise is a fit for their current operation.

A main goal of the project is to reach out to small-scale farmers and ranchers who are finding it difficult to make a living on the income generated solely by their agricultural outfit. To further include traditionally underserved populations we will be giving out some scholarships that will cover the cost of attending the workshops and obtaining the materials.

While a primary focus of these workshops is to run participants through a series of activities so that they may better understand the realities of expanding to agri-nature tourism, another goal is to simply facilitate networking. We hope that getting people together in this fashion will aid in networking between those with similar interests. Along these lines we hope to provide a neutral space for participants to interact with local regulators and experts.

To be able to better follow the workshops and retain the knowledge gained, each participant will take home a binder with supporting materials from each module, and supplemental information from the UC Small Farm Center, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Sonoran Institute. By the end of the workshops we will have gone through five modules including "Is it for us?" "Your Community's Potential," "Assessing Your Resources," "Meeting Legal and Regulatory Challenges," "Managing Risk," and "Marketing and the Enterprise Plan." During the meetings we will provide experts on these topics to walk everyone through the realities of each topic. For one of the sessions, the group will meet at a field location to see an established agri-tourism site. From these modules, participants will determine if they are ready to start up an agri-tourism or nature tourism venture and if so they will have the tools to hit the ground running.

This funding will allow for follow-up assistance in developing realistic business plans, which will be provided by skilled counselors from the local Small Business Development Corporation.

Total Project Cost: \$70,000.

This request: \$20,000.